

Copy.

Epiphany 160
Ambleside,

July 9th, 1894.

Dear Sir or Madam,

I have received a circular letter dated London, July 3rd, signed by two members of the Executive Committee of the Parents' National Educational Union. The points discussed in the circular affect both the principles and constitution of the Society.

These are:-

- (a) Whether the Executive Committee has power to alter, verbally or otherwise, the objects of the Society.
- (b) If this point be conceded, whether the alterations in question be admissible.

As to the first point, we append a legal opinion which expresses the common - sense view of the case:-

I have carefully considered the rules and principles of the Parents' National Educational Union and the objects of the Society as set out in Rule 3, and also the advertisement of the Union containing a statement of what are alleged to be its objects, and there appear to be very serious differences. The Educational Union was formed for specific purposes: the President, Vice-presidents, and Council, all joined knowing of those purposes, and all the subscriptions paid to it have been in reliance upon carrying out those purposes, and the Union would be guilty of a very serious breach of the trusts imposed upon it if it were to attempt to vary those objects without considering the members. The purposes are set out in Rule 3, and so long as the Union remains in existence it must exist for those purposes. If fresh objects are sought to be introduced or the old ones varied the present Union should be dissolved, and a new one formed. If this were done by the authority of a preponderating majority of the members of the branches they might possibly be justified in retaining the old name after having altered the objects, but under no other circumstances. It should be clearly understood that all advertisements and notices relating to the objects of the Society should strictly follow Rule 3, otherwise they are calculated to mislead the public, and to do serious injury to the cause of the Union.

(Signed) GEO. GATEY. Solicitor.

Rule 3. That the Objects of the Society shall be:

- (1) To assist parents of all classes to understand the best principles and methods of Education in all its aspects, and especially in those which concern the formation of habits and character.

- (2) To create a better public opinion on the subject of the training of children, and with this object in view, to collect and make known the best information and experience on the subject.
- (3) To afford to parents opportunities for Co-operation and consultation so that the wisdom and experience of each may be made profitable to all.
- (4) To stimulate their enthusiasm through the sympathy of numbers working together.
- (5) To secure greater unity and continuity of Education by harmonising home and school training.

"Leaflet" -The Objects are:

The Voluntary Association of parents in an Educational Union as a means of compassing two ends ; first, to assist all who are interested in children to understand the principles and methods of the "new" education as set forth by Pestalozzi, Herbart, Spencer, and Frobel, and other educational philosophers, (the last words were added at the recent committee meeting) and to apply them to individual character aiming at the harmonious development rather than the mere instruction of the child; second, to establish a ground of meeting for the mutual advantage of theory and practice between parents and Educationalists thereby securing unity and continuity in home and school training.

As to the second point allow me to put before you the following considerations:-

Within our own time the science of education has been absolutely revolutionised, not by educationalists, but by Physiologists, who have made the brain their speciality. Any real education depends upon the possibility of setting up good records, obliterating evil records in the physical substance of the brain.

These records, whether physical, moral, mental, or spiritual, we recognise by the Habit, which is the outward and visible sign of each.

The importance of training children in good habits has been

recognised time out of mind, but the methods of procedure is entirely altered with the recognition of the definite physical processes which register the habit formed.

The doctrine of Heredity, the physiological culture of Habit, the potency of the idea which initiates the evolution of every habit, these are the factors of education we have to deal with, and this is the new wine which cannot be put into old bottles.

We delight to honour the names of the older educationalists to whom we owe so much in the way of suggestion and inspiration, but it is manifestly impossible that these should have indicated the principles and methods of that science of education which is "yet" in its infancy, which is perhaps the divine revelation given to our own day, and which opens most glorious prospects for the elevation of the race.

However suggestive, wise, and inspired it may be, educational thought which does not rest on a physiological basis must be more or less empirical.

The education of the P.N.E.U. exists to further, runs on two lines:-

- (a) The formation of habits, bodily, mental, moral, and spiritual, upon the scientific basis afforded by Physiology.
- (b) The presentation of that idea which is the all-important initial step in the formation of every Habit.

In these two principles we recognise to the full both the material and spiritual side of man's nature, and find ourselves abreast with the science of the day whether physical or mental.

- (c) As a corollary to these: The development of faculties so much insisted on by the earlier educationalists takes a quite subordinate place in the latest educational thought as promulgated by the P.N.E.U. the more especially as this society appeals to a class born with an inheritance of more or less self-developing faculties.

The Parents' National Educational Union does not claim to have originated any part whatever of this living thought. We derive it entirely from such as Huxley, Carpenter, Maudeley, and the hundred Physiologists, English and German, who are

devoting themselves to the study of the brain-tissues.

Our effort has been to bring what has hitherto been accessible for the most part to students of Physiology within the range of home practice in the bringing up of children.

Our success in this effort is due to the wonderfully illuminating character of the line of teaching of which P.N.E.U. is, so to speak the medium.

This teaching be it remembered is no mere patch on an old garment; it covers the whole scope of education in every aspect.

The little manual containing the lectures from which the Society originated is a slight attempt to introduce Parents to this kind of educational thought.

The Magazine which is the organ of the society carries on this teaching. One of our most proud successes is to have attracted to us a class of contributors who have done great service for Education on these advanced lines, and who form in fact, a school of educational thought perhaps peculiar to the P.N.E.U.

It cannot therefore be said with justice that "absolute vagueness is to prevail" as regards the best principles and methods of Education as understood by the Union.

It was not possible to express all this in the "Objects", but seeing that sources of fuller information were provided from the first, the "Objects" clauses 1 and 2, sufficiently indicate the lines the Union was designed to follow.

At the same time, as advanced thought in this and other matters can be received only by those who are ready for it, the "Objects" were designed to cover all earnest Educational effort while care was taken to avoid limitations which would hinder the advance of science; especially that most serious of all hindrances, the docketting of the Union with any given name or names.

We hold that Education as a science must ever maintain a tentative attitude. The moment she frames a stereotyped creed represented by any given name or names of the past or present, she becomes formal and mechanical rather than spontaneous and living.

The effort to define or limit in matters too broad and deep to be expressed in a definition or represented by a name is the history of all division whether in Religion or Education.

The chairman of the committee and three of the four Honorary Organising Secretaries who have had great experience in inaugurating Branches find that this large view of Education appeals strongly to parents who have failed to respond to the efforts hitherto made by other Societies to rally them round great Educational names. We have not found the least difficulty in explaining the "Objects" of a Union which reaches the needs of those actively concerned in the bringing up of children.

May I earnestly entreat your presence at the Committee meeting summoned for the 18th inst., and that you will support the above views as summed up in the resolution of the chairman.

I am, dear Sir or Madam,

Charlotte M. Mason.

Hon. Org. Sec.

10th December,
1947

Dearest Kit Kit,

I do hope your eye is better. I have just replied to your telegram about the Trustees meeting which is at 11.30 a.m. on the 14th January at Church House, Room 1. Mr. Ranger will be circulating a document to the Trustees who are legally - as he tells me only you, Miss Wic, the Dean and Myself, as he and Miss Cholmondeley have not been enrolled. However, you will perhaps ask Miss Cholmondeley to come. I am arranging a table for lunch between the two meetings; you will be my guests. Would you perhaps tell this to Miss Cholmondeley and Miss Wic when you write to them? Don't write to Mr. Ranger or the Dean. I am picking up the latter at Paddington on my way to the meeting.

Now I think you will feel that I have good news for you and that all your fears and worries will be assuaged. Mr. Ranger took me to see Counsel yesterday - the Hon. Charles Russell, Lord Russell of Killowen's son. Of course he had had a child in a P.U.S. School - Miss Collins at Horsham; his wife was a pupil of Miss Bernau. However, being an R.C. his child has now gone to the very good Convent school at St. Leonards. I do hope that one day we may have a first class Convent school working in the P.U.S. so that the R.C. children who go to our day preparatory schools can go on.

All the following is "sub judice" so please do not comment on it in any way. It is a waste of time. We laypeople cannot judge legal matters and I am the first to recognize that I made some impossible proposals. Mr. Russell coming on the whole matter as an outsider considers - as far as I can understand - that the three bodies, Practising School, College and P.U.S. cannot be separated as to financial holding though each one should run its own accounts as Overstone and Burgess Hill do under the C.M. schools. He is therefore proposing to carry out your and Mr. Ranger's scheme of making the Trustees and the Council one body - a company, as allowed for in Miss Mason's Will. This new Company will probably be called, as you hoped, "Charlotte Mason Foundation."

When....

Original

it is formed, the P.N.E.U. if it so wishes (and I hope it will) will be able to incorporate itself into this Company, keeping its name and calling it say, "The P.N.E.U. and C.M. Foundation."
- This is MY idea of a name.

He is of opinion, as an outsider, that the whole world knows P.N.E.U. and it would be wicked to drop the name; but this would be a second phase and nothing of this comes up to the present meetings. He is preparing a document which will be circulated to the Trustees and if they approve will be brought up to the Council Meeting. Anyhow, nothing is going to happen that can in any way cause you disquiet.

Yours with love,

Dear Miss Van Straubenzee,

10th December, 1947.
The Hon. Mrs. Franklin
Hyde Park, W.2
20, Portchester Terrace
Hon. Secretary.

President - ISABEL MARCTIONEES OF ABERDEEN & TELMAR, G.B.E.
Founder - CHARLOTTE MASON

Parents' National Educational Union